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# Charter and By-Laws

of

THE PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY

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for

PROMOTING THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY,  
AND FOR THE RELIEF OF FREE NEGROES  
UNLAWFULLY HELD IN BONDAGE,  
AND FOR  
IMPROVING THE CONDITION OF THE  
AFRICAN RACE

Philadelphia, Pa.

1916

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AN ACT

To incorporate a Society by the name of

THE PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY

for

PROMOTING THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY,  
AND FOR THE RELIEF OF FREE NEGROES  
UNLAWFULLY HELD IN BONDAGE,  
AND FOR  
IMPROVING THE CONDITION OF THE AFRICAN  
RACE

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*Section 1.* WHEREAS—a voluntary society has for some years subsisted in this state, by the name and title of “The Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery, and the Relief of Free Negroes unlawfully held in Bondage,” which has evidently co-operated with the views of the legislature, expressed in the act of this commonwealth, passed the first day of March, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty, entitled, “An Act for the gradual abolition of slavery,” and a supplement thereto, passed the twenty-ninth day of March, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight, entitled, “An Act to explain and amend an act, entitled an act for the gradual abolition of slavery.”

And whereas this society have lately extended their plan so far as to comprehend within their intentions the improving the condition as well of those negroes who now are, or hereafter shall become, free, by the operation of the said acts, or otherwise, and their pos-

terity; and have, by their petition to this house, prayed to be created and erected into a body politic and corporate, for the purpose of increasing their ability to be useful in the several matters aforesaid.

*Section 2.* Be it therefore enacted, and it is hereby enacted, by representatives of the freemen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in general assembly met, and by authority of the same, That the present members of the said Society, viz.—Dr. Benjamin Franklin et al.:

And such other person and persons as shall be hereafter mentioned, and their successors, be and they are hereby created and declared to be one body politic and corporate in deed and in law, by the name style and title of “The Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and for the Relief of Free Negroes unlawfully held in Bondage and for improving the condition of the African Race,” and shall have perpetual succession, and shall be able to sue and be sued, implead, and be answered unto in all courts of law and equity, and to make, have and use one common seal to give authenticity to their acts, deeds, records and proceedings, and the same at their will and pleasure to break, alter, change and make anew, and to purchase, take and hold by gift, grant, demise, bargain and sale, will and devise, bequest, testament, legacy, or by any other mode of conveyance, any lands, tenements, goods, chattels, or estate, real, personal or mixed, or choses in action, not exceeding at any one time the yearly value of fifteen hundred pounds lawful money of Pennsylvania in the whole; and the same to give, grant, bargain, sell, demise, convey and assure to others for the whole or any lesser estate than they have in the same, in such manner and form as the said Society at their future meetings hereinafter described shall order

and direct; and to apply the rents, issues, and profits, income and interest of such estate, and the monies arising from the sales of any parts thereof, to the uses, ends, intents and purposes of their institution, according to the rules, orders, regulations, and constitution of the said society, now in force, or which, according to the provisions hereinafter made, shall from time to time be declared and ordained, touching and concerning the same, as fully and effectually as any natural person or body politic and corporate within this state, by the constitution and laws of this commonwealth, can do, and perform the like things.

*Section 3. (As amended pursuant to decree of Court of Common Pleas No. 3, of Philadelphia County, March Term, 1900, No. 399.)*

And be it further enacted, and it is hereby enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the officers of the said Society shall consist of one President, two Vice Presidents, *one* Secretary, one Treasurer, who shall also be keeper of the common seal, and so many counsellors as the said Society shall from time to time think proper to appoint and elect, *and a Board of Managers, composed of the President, the two Vice-Presidents, the Secretary and the Treasurer of the said Society and four other members of the said Society*, all of whom shall be chosen annually by ballot of a majority of votes of the whole number of members who shall be present at the *Annual Meeting*, which shall be held on the *last Fifth day (Thursday) of the Fourth month (April)*, in every year, or at such other time and at such place as the said Society shall by their rules and orders direct and appoint.

*Section 4. (As amended pursuant to decree of Court of Common Pleas No. 3, of Philadelphia County, March Term, 1900, No. 399.)*

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the said Society shall and may hold *one Annual Meeting as provided for in section 3* at such place and hour of the day as they may agree unto in every year forever hereafter, and may adjourn said *Annual Meeting* from time to time, and shall and may hold such other special meetings as the Society by their rules and orders shall direct and appoint, and shall and may hold such other meetings as the President of the said Society shall think necessary to call, or one of the Vice Presidents of the said Society, at the request of any six members thereof shall call, of which special meetings notice shall be given in two of the public newspapers printed in the city of Philadelphia, at least *ten* days before the time of any such meeting, at any of which *annual* or special meetings or adjournments thereof, it shall and may be lawful for the said Society, or so many of them as shall meet, by a majority of voices to agree, to ordain and to establish such by-laws, rules, orders and regulations as they shall judge necessary for the well-ordering and governing the said Society and for the well-managing the affairs thereof; and to fix and ascertain the terms and conditions upon which new members shall be admitted to the said Society and upon which former members may be removed, and to define and ascertain the duties of the several officers of the said Society, and for want of obedience in any of the officers of the said Society to remove and displace them and others to appoint, and generally to agree to, ordain and establish all such by-laws, rules, orders, and regulations for the well-governing of the said Society, for perpetuating a succession of its officers, and performing the duties they have undertaken, or shall undertake, as the said Society at any of their said *annual* meetings, or special meetings

and adjournments thereof, shall by a majority of voices determine to be right and proper. Provided always, nevertheless, that no real estate shall be disposed of, or the right and estate of the Society therein be lessened, or altered for the less, unless the President, or one of the Vice Presidents, and at least *twelve* members shall be present at such meeting, and a majority of those present shall agree to the same, and provided also that all and every the by-laws, rules, orders and regulations already enacted and made or hereafter to be enacted and made by the said Society be reasonable in themselves and not contradictory to the constitution and laws of the Commonwealth.

*Section 5.* And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the Constitution of "the Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and for the Relief of Free Negroes unlawfully held in Bondage," as enlarged at a meeting of the said Society held at Philadelphia, the twenty-third day of April, in the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven, and all rules, orders, regulations and proceedings made and had by the said Society in pursuance thereof, be and they are hereby declared to be in full force and binding upon the said Society, by this act, created and incorporated, until the same shall be repealed, altered or annulled at a quarterly or special meeting or adjournment thereof, to be held in pursuance of this act, as fully and effectually as if the same to be originally adopted by the said Society, hereby incorporated and created at one of their said meetings.

*Section 6.* And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That until the next election which shall be held by the said Society in pursuance of this act, the said Benjamin Franklin shall be the President thereof, the

said James Pemberton and Jonathan Penrose shall be the Vice Presidents thereof, and the said Benjamin Rush and Caspar Wistar shall be the Secretaries thereof, the said James Starr shall be the Treasurer thereof, and William Lewis, Myers Fisher, William Rawle, and John D. Coxe shall be the counsellors thereof, and that all and every the committee and committees heretofore appointed by the said Society for promoting the abolition of slavery and for the relief of free negroes unlawfully held in bondage, shall be and continue to be the officers and committees of the said Society hereby created and incorporated, and shall report to, and account with the same, in the same manner, as they would have done to the former society in case this act had not been passed.

*Section 7.* And be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That this act shall in all things be construed in the most favourable and liberal manner to and for the Society, in order to effectuate the privileges hereby to them granted; and that no misnomer of the said corporation in any deed, will, testament, gift, grant, demise or other instrument of contract, or conveyance shall vitiate or defeat the same, if the said corporation shall be sufficiently described to ascertain the intent of the party or parties to give, devise, bequeath, convey, or assure to, or contract with the said corporation hereby created by the name aforesaid. Nor shall any non-uses of the said privileges hereby granted create any forfeiture of the same, but the same may be exercised by the said corporation, notwithstanding their failure to meet at any of the times herein specified, to hold their annual elections, the officers elected at any of the said annual elections, shall continue to hold and exercise their offices until others shall be duly elected

to succeed them, at some future meeting of the said corporation.

Signed by order of the House,

RICHARD PETERS, *Speaker.*

Enacted into a law at Philadelphia, on Tuesday, the eighth day of December, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine.

PETER ZACHARY LLOYD,  
*Clerk of the General Assembly.*

*Section 8. (Added pursuant to decree of Court of Common Pleas No. 3, of Philadelphia County, March term, 1900, No. 399).* That it shall be the duty of the said Board of Managers to conduct all the business of the said Society (except the sale of real estate), to receive bequests, to sell securities other than real estate, and to invest and reinvest and keep invested the funds of the said Society and to provide all things necessary to carry into effect the object of the said Society, and to pay all the expenditures incurred in and about the premises; and it shall be the duty of said Board of Managers to meet at least once in three months, to supply any vacancy therein, to enact rules and regulations for the government thereof, to keep regular minutes of the proceedings, and the same to exhibit when required to the said Society, and to make an annual report to the said Society.

## BY-LAWS

Adopted 4th Month 25th, 1901.

*Article 1. MEMBERS.* Any person, 21 years or over, of good character, desiring to promote the objects of the Society, shall be eligible to membership in it. To become a member, his or her name must be proposed at a meeting of the Board of Managers, or general

meeting of the Society, and must then receive a majority vote at a subsequent regular or special meeting of the Board or of the Society; but no person holding a slave shall be eligible to membership.

*Article 2. DUES.* From and after the first day of First Month, 1902, each member shall pay into the Treasury one dollar a year on or before the Annual Meeting; any member who has not made this payment when the Annual Meeting convenes, shall be disqualified from voting thereat, and subsequently, upon due notice, his membership may be suspended by vote of the Board of Managers.

*Article 3. REGULAR MEETINGS.* Regular meetings of the Board of Managers shall be held at the time of the Annual Meeting, and on the last Fifth day (Thursday) in the Seventh, Tenth and First Months.

*Article 4. SPECIAL MEETINGS.* Special meetings of the Board of Managers shall be called by the President, or, in his absence or inability, by either of the Vice Presidents, and the Secretary shall send written notices to the members of the Board.

*Article 5. CHAIRMAN.* The President, or, in his absence, one of the Vice Presidents, shall preside at each meeting of the Board of Managers, or, if they shall both be absent, a chairman pro-tem. shall be appointed.

*Article 6. QUORUM.* Five members of the Board of Managers shall form a quorum.

*Article 7. ORDERS.* Orders on the Treasurer for the payment of money shall be signed by the President, or chairman pro-tem., presiding at the meeting of the Board of Managers in which the payments were authorized, and attested by the Secretary of the meeting.

*Article 8. AMENDMENTS.* These BY-LAWS may be

amended at any time by a majority vote of the Board of Managers; but the change must have been proposed, in writing, at a previous meeting and notice thereof sent to each member of the Board of Managers.

#### LIST OF MEMBERS.

WM. M. LONGSTRETH,	<i>230 Chestnut Street, Phila., Pa.</i>
CHAS. F. JENKINS,	<i>Farm Journal, Phila., Pa.</i>
ROBERT M. JANNEY,	<i>1015 Penna. Building, Phila., Pa.</i>
WILLIAM C. BIDDLE,	<i>78 Reade Street, New York, N. Y.</i>
ELLWOOD HEACOCK,	<i>2027 N. College Ave., Phila., Pa.</i>
ALFRED MOORE,	<i>618 No. American Bldg., Phila., Pa.</i>
THOMAS P. BACON,	<i>3212 Baring St., Phila., Pa.</i>
ANNA M. JACKSON,	<i>215 E. 15th St., New York, N. Y.</i>
D. HENRY WRIGHT,	<i>727 Walnut St., Phila., Pa.</i>
SUSAN P. WHARTON,	<i>910 Clinton St., Phila., Pa.</i>
RICHARD R. WRIGHT, JR.,	<i>631 Pine St., Phila., Pa.</i>
ELIZABETH LLOYD,	<i>140 N. 15th St., Phila., Pa.</i>
MARY R. LIVEZEY,	<i>908 W. Marshall St., Norristown, Pa.</i>
HOWARD C. ROBERTS,	<i>513 W. Main St., Norristown, Pa.</i>
R. BARCLAY JONES,	<i>630 Chestnut St., Phila., Pa.</i>
WALTER H. JENKINS,	<i>140 N. 15th St., Phila., Pa.</i>
JOEL BORTON,	<i>133 S. 4th St., Phila., Pa.</i>
ELLA R. BICKNELL,	<i>1839 S. 57th St., Phila., Pa.</i>
J. HENRY SCATTERGOOD,	<i>648 Bourse Bldg., Phila., Pa.</i>
ISAAC ROBERTS,	<i>50 Beekman St., New York, N. Y.</i>
HENRY FERRIS,	<i>140 N. 15th St., Phila., Pa.</i>
ABEL P. CALDWELL,	<i>1706 N. Woodstock St., Phila., Pa.</i>
CHAS. FRED. WHITE,	<i>1031 S. 18th St., Phila., Pa.</i>
DR. CHAS. H. GUBBINS,	<i>N. W. Cor. 15th and Race Sts., Phila., Pa.</i>
ROBERT BIDDLE,	<i>Riverton, N. J.</i>
HENRY GAWTHROP,	<i>Swarthmore, Pa.</i>
GEORGE W. MITCHELL,	<i>908 Walnut St., Phila., Pa.</i>

ELLWOOD ROBERTS,	<i>Winslow, N. J.</i>
FRANK L. NEALL,	<i>367 Bourse Bldg., Phila., Pa.</i>
ARABELLA CARTER,	<i>1305 Arch St., Phila., Pa.</i>
CORNELIA HANCOCK,	<i>50 N. Delanoy Place,</i> <i>Atlantic City, N. J.</i>
ELIZABETH POWELL BOND,	<i>6300 Greene St., Germantown, Pa.</i>
HELEN UNDERHILL WOOD,	<i>Mt. Kisco, N. Y.</i>
ISADORE MARTIN,	<i>6 No. 42nd St., Phila., Pa.</i>
DR. HENRY L. GOWENS,	<i>1636 Walnut St., Phila., Pa.</i>
HUGH S. WALKER,	<i>765 N. 20th St., Phila., Pa.</i>
WILLIAM C. COLES,	<i>Moorestown, N. J.</i>
BENJAMIN C. HERITAGE,	<i>Mickleton, N. J.</i>
ELLIS W. BACON,	<i>3603 Baring St., Phila., Pa.</i>
CASSANDRA T. CARR,	<i>1715 N. 19th St., Phila., Pa.</i>
ALFRED DARNELL,	<i>140 N. 15th St., Phila., Pa.</i>
SARAH W. KNIGHT,	<i>Somerton, Pa.</i>
SAMUEL L. BORTON,	<i>Hale Building, Phila., Pa.</i>
THEODORE JUSTICE,	<i>W. Clapier St., Germantown, Pa.</i>
CLAUDE J. SMITH,	<i>Swarthmore, Pa.</i>
LILLIAN M. ELLIS,	<i>Trooper, Pa.</i>
ETHEL M. B. ROBERTS,	<i>513 W. Main St., Norristown, Pa.</i>
M. JENNIE GARRETT,	<i>1519 Bouvier St., Phila., Pa.</i>
REV. MATTHEW ANDERSON,	<i>1924 S. College Ave., Phila., Pa.</i>
DR. JESSE H. HOLMES,	<i>Swarthmore, Pa.</i>
REBECCA W. HOLMES,	<i>Swarthmore, Pa.</i>

## EXTRACTS FROM PROCEEDING TO AMEND CHARTER

*In the Court of Common Pleas Number 3, in and for the  
County of Philadelphia.*

To the Honorable the Judges of the said Court:

The Petition of "The Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery and for the Relief of Free Negroes unlawfully held in Bondage, and for Improving the Condition of the African Race," respectfully represents:

That it is a body politic and corporate in the law, enjoying the rights and privileges of a corporation under an Act of Assembly dated December 8th, 1789;

That since the time of the incorporation of the said Society, it has been engaged in the work for which it was formed as a beneficial and charitable society;

That the said Society has found itself hampered and hindered in the prosecution of its work and in the transaction of its business;

It therefore has seemed expedient and wise to make application for an amendment to its Charter.

That at a meeting of the said Society held the 25th day of First Month (January), 1900, the following amendments to the Charter were adopted, to wit:

*Section 3* of the Charter was amended to read as follows:

(See section 3 in Charter, page 3)

*Section 4* of the Charter was amended to read as follows:

(See section 4 in Charter, page 4)

The Charter was further amended by adding a new section thereto to be known as Section 8, and to read as follows:

(See section 8 in Charter, page 4)

Your petitioner is desirous of having the Charter amended and altered as above set forth and believes the proposed amendments will be beneficial and lawful and necessary for the proper accomplishment of the objects for which said Society was incorporated.

Your petitioner therefore prays your Honorable Court to grant a decree, authorizing the amendment as aforesaid and that the same shall be deemed and taken to be a part of the Charter of the said Society, being in substitution of the section 3 and 4, and the new section 8 being in addition to the Charter as originally granted.

And it will ever pray, etc.

SAMUEL S. ASH,

*Vice President and President pro-tem.*

Attest:

JOS. M. TRUMAN, JR.,  
*Secretary.*

WILLIAM S. INGRAM,  
*Treasurer.*

Philadelphia County, S. S.

Jos. M. Truman, Jr., being duly affirmed according to law, doth declare and say that he is the Secretary of the above-named Society and that the facts set forth in the above Petition are just and true to the best of his knowledge, information and belief.

Affirmed and subscribed before me the 22nd day of March, 1900.

WM. A. SHAYOCK,  
*Notary Public.*

JOS. M. TRUMAN, JR.

### DECREE

And now to wit, this sixth day of April, A. D. 1900, it is ordered and decreed that the application for the proposed amended Charter shall be filed and notice given of said application in two daily newspapers, to wit:

*The Press* and *North American*, and one weekly paper, to wit: "The Legal Intelligencer" once a week for three weeks, setting forth briefly the character and objects of the said amendments, and after due proof of such notice shall have been made and filed the petitioner shall have leave to apply for decree that the said amendments to the said Charter shall be deemed and taken to be a part of the Charter of the said Society.

H. J. M.

*In the Court of Common Pleas No. 3, for the County of Philadelphia, March term, 1900, No. 399.*

In re "The Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and for the Relief of Free Negroes unlawfully held in Bondage, and for the improving the condition of the African Race."

And now to wit; this 14th day of May, A. D. 1900, the Court having read and considered the Petition filed by "The Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and for the Relief of Free Negroes unlawfully held in Bondage, and for improving the condition of the African Race," for leave to amend its Charter in the manner set forth in the said petition, and it appearing to the Court that the alterations and amendments asked for are lawful and beneficial and do not conflict with the requirements of the Statutes or of the Constitution of the Commonwealth, and the annexed proof of publication of Notice having been submitted to the Court showing that advertisement has been made as provided for by law, the Court do order and decree that the said Petition be and the same is hereby granted. And the amendments and alterations of the Charter prayed for shall, upon the recording of the same, be hereafter deemed and taken to be a part of the Charter of the said Society.

And sections 3 and 4 of the Charter shall hereafter read as contained in the Petition for amendment of Charter instead of the manner in which the said sections read in the charter originally granted and section 8 shall be deemed and taken to be a part of the said Charter as set out in the said Petition.

H. J. M.

Recorded in the office for Recording of Deeds in and for the City and County of Philadelphia in Charter book No. 25, page 267.

Witness my hand and seal of office this 14th day of May, A. D. 1900.

JOHN VIRDEN,  
*Recorder of Deeds.*

SECTIONS 3, AND 4 OF THE ORIGINAL CHARTER  
(Previous to amendments in 1900.)

*Section 3. And be it further enacted, and it is hereby enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the officers of the said Society shall consist of one President, two Vice Presidents, two Secretaries, one Treasurer, who shall also be the keeper of the common seal, and so many counsellors as the said Society shall from time to time think proper to appoint and elect, all of whom shall be chosen annually by ballot of a majority of votes of the whole number of members who shall be present at the quarterly meeting hereinafter mentioned, which shall be held on the first Second day of the week (called Monday) in the First Month (called January) in every year after the passing of this act, or at such other time, and at such place, as the Society shall, by their rules and orders, direct and appoint; and of such committees, for carrying into execution the designs of the said institution, as the said Society heretofore have appointed, and hereafter at any of their quarterly or special meet-*

ings shall agree to, and appoint in the manner and form to be hereafter agreed upon.

*Section 4. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,* That the said Society shall and may hold four quarterly meetings in every year, at such place and hour of the day as they shall agree unto, on every the first second day of the week (called Monday) on every first, fourth, seventh and tenth months (called January, April, July and October) in every year forever hereafter, and may adjourn the said quarterly meetings from time to time; and shall and may hold such other special meetings as the Society by their rules and orders may direct and appoint, and shall and may hold such other meetings as the President of the said Society shall think necessary to call, or one of the Vice Presidents of the said Society, at the request of any six members thereof, shall call, of which special meetings notice shall be given in two of the public newspapers printed in the city of Philadelphia, at least two days before the time of meeting; at any of which quarterly or special meetings, or adjournments thereof, it shall and may be lawful for the said Society, or so many of them as shall meet, by a majority of voices to agree, to ordain and to establish such by-laws, rules, orders and regulations as they shall judge necessary, for the well-ordering and governing the said Society; and for the well-managing the affairs thereof, and to appoint such and so many committees, consisting of such of their members as they shall think necessary, to superintend the different departments of duties already undertaken by the Society heretofore subsisting, or hereafter to be undertaken by the Society, hereby established, and to receive the reports of such committees, and take such order thereon, as to them shall seem proper: and to

fix and ascertain the terms and conditions upon which new members shall be admitted in the said Society, and upon which former members may be removed, and to define and ascertain the duties of the several officers and committees of the said Society, and to enforce the same by such reasonable fines and forfeitures to be imposed on delinquents, as they shall think proper, and for want of obedience in any of the members, committees, or officers of the said Society, to remove and displace them, and others to appoint, and generally to agree to, ordain, and establish all such by-laws, rules, orders and regulations, for the well-governing of the said Society, for perpetuating a succession of its officers and performing the duties they have undertaken, or shall undertake as the said Society, at any of their said quarterly or special meetings or adjournments thereof, shall, by a majority of voices, determine to be right and proper. *Provided always nevertheless,* That no real or personal estates above the value of sixty dollars shall be disposed of, or the right and estate of the society therein shall be lessened or altered for the less, nor any by-law, rule, order or regulation of the said Society enacted repealed or altered, nor any sum of money appropriated to any new use not before agreed upon by any of the meetings or committees to be appointed, unless the President or one of the Vice Presidents, and at least twenty members shall be present at such meeting, and a majority of these present shall agree to the same.

And provided also, That all and every by-law, rules, orders and regulations already enacted and made, or hereafter to be enacted and made by the said Society, be reasonable in themselves and not contradictory to the constitution and laws of this Commonwealth.



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